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KMOV Ch. 2 St. Louis –

Mo. Attorney General sets court dates in lawsuit against Bridgeton Landfill owner

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(KMOV.com) -- Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster has requested court dates in his lawsuit against the owner of the Bridgeton Sanitary Landfill in St. Louis County after he said it violated the state's environmental protection laws.

On May 14 and 15, the Circuit Court of St. Louis County will hear evidence regarding Koster's request for a preliminary injunction against Republic Services.

Koster announced his action against Republic Services, Inc. at a news conference in downtown St. Louis on March 27.

The lawsuit was filed a week after Missouri Department of Natural Resources director Sara Parker Pauley sent a letter to the attorney general's office asking for legal action against the landfill. Pauley cites concerns about potential environmental violations at the landfill, which sits near Lambert Airport.

The Department of Natural Resources recently ran test of the area and state officials determined it tested for high levels of hydrogen sulfide in the air. Hydrogen sulfide often causes headaches and irritation to eyes, nose and throat.

Republic Services sent a statement that said there is no proof the hydrogen sulfide in the air is from their landfill.

But Koster said the landfill has violated several of Missouri's environmental laws since an underground landfill fire at the Bridgeton facility intensified in January.

Koster said it has caused violations of the state's air, hazardous waste, solid waste and clean water laws.

Because of the fire, neighboring residents and employees have been complaining about foul odors coming from the landfill.

"The nearby residents, schools, senior care facilities and a local hospital all have dealt with terrible, ongoing odor problems from the Bridgeton Landfill that have impacted their ability to go about normal activities," Koster said.

In a statement on its website, Bridgeton Landfill LLC says it is working to fix the problem. Forty wells will be added by April 15 to remove odor-causing gas, then a cap will be installed over the odor-causing area of the landfill.

Koster said it is hard for St. Louis-area residents who have not been directly exposed to the site to grasp its effects on local neighborhoods and businesses.

"While we have been assured by Republic Services that they have developed a remediation plan and are implementing that plan as expeditiously as possible, it is important that we ensure the corporation's promises are binding and enforceable in a court of law," Koster added.

Koster said the lawsuit also seeks to ensure that Republic pays for the costs of experts hired by the Department of Natural Resources for testing.

Associated Press contributed to this report.

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